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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001179

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2017  
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#)  
SUBJECT: HEAVY FACTIONAL FIGHTING IN GAZA

REF: JERUSALEM 1172 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary. At least 14 Palestinians were killed in gunbattles in Gaza as of 1600 on June 12, with heavy violence in most cities and especially in Gaza City, the site of most political and security headquarters. Hamas warned all Palestinian security forces (PASF) to vacate their bases, and the al-Aqsa Brigades threatened Hamas leaders and institutions. PASF and UN contacts report that Hamas set up fighting positions near the National Security Forces (NSF) HQ (al-Saraya) and Presidential compound in Gaza City, but PASF contacts report the NSF and PG areas are under PASF control as of 1700 on June 12. Shooting near the PSO headquarters in Tal al-Hawa (Gaza City) has been nearly constant during the day. Gunmen fired an RPG and small arms at Hamas PM Haniyah's house early on June 12, causing substantial damage but no injuries, and "Executive Force" fighters killed Fatah's secretary-general for Bayt Lahiya late June 11. Hamas fighters also fired at the residences of senior Fatah and security officials in Gaza City and launched four improvised mortars at the Gaza City Presidential compound. PASF contacts report Hamas fighters were repelled and suffered losses in these attacks, but these reports are not independently confirmed.

¶2. (SBU) Summary, cont. Hamas officials accused Fatah of kidnapping and executing three "Executive Force" members in Gaza City and Bayt Lahiya late June 11, and Fatah militia kidnapped and killed 'Amr Rantisi, nephew of assassinated Hamas leader Abd al-Aziz Rantisi, on June 12. According to UN contacts, Hamas militants occupied Khan Yunis government buildings and NSF and Force 17 bases after June 12 gunbattles, and destroyed a Bahriya (coastal patrol) base. PASF contacts downplayed the significance of the positions and said PASF still have a strong presence in Khan Yunis. There is no independent confirmation of either version of events. MG Burhan Hamad (Egyptian GID), the lead Egyptian mediator told Arabic-language press June 12 that neither Fatah nor Hamas representatives had responded to his invitation to hold new ceasefire talks at 1300 local. PASF took over Hamas-affiliated al-Aqsa Television's Ramallah bureau on June 12, arresting three employees and confiscating reporting equipment. End summary.

Heavy Clashes in N. Gaza, Gaza City  
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¶3. (SBU) Fighting intensified in Gaza City on June 12 and centered around key PASF security compounds and Fatah/Presidential offices. According to local security contacts, the NSF and Presidential Guard remain in control of these bases as of 1300 local, although this has not been independently verified. Hamas issued a warning on its satellite TV channel for all PASF forces to vacate their

bases before Hamas takes them by force, and declared northern Gaza to be a "closed security zone" under the authority of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (Hamas' military-wing). PASF and UN contacts report that Hamas has set up fighting positions near the NSF HQ (al-Saraya) and Presidential compound in Gaza City, while shooting near the PSO headquarters in Tal al-Hawa (Gaza City) has been nearly constant on June 12.

14. (SBU) Hamas officials told Palestinian press June 12 that Fatah gunmen kidnapped and executed three "Executive Force" members in Gaza City and Bayt Lahiya late June 11. Fatah militia kidnapped and killed 'Amr Rantisi, nephew of assassinated Hamas leader Abd al-Aziz Rantisi, on June 12. Hamas militants took over the al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City and main medical center in Bayt Hanun after heavy fighting with the NSF and Fatah militia late June 11 and early June 12.

15. (SBU) Gunmen fired an RPG and small arms at Hamas PM Haniyah's house early on June 12, causing substantial damage but no injuries. This attack was the second on Haniyah's residence in two days. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhum called the attack an assassination attempt and accused Fatah of attempting a coup. "Executive Force" fighters killed Jamal Abu al-Jidiyan (Fatah secretary-general for Bayt Lahiya) after dragging him from his home late June 11 and riddling his house with bullets and grenades. June 12, Hamas fighters fired at the Gaza city Muqawsi high-rise building, where Fatah spokesman Maher Miqdad and Fatah Field Committee chief Majid Abu Shammali live, and launched four improvised mortars at the Gaza City Presidential Compound, all of which missed according to PASF contacts.

Fighting Spreads to Central Gaza and Khan Yunis

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16. (SBU) According to UN contacts and press reports, Hamas militants took over Khan Yunis government buildings and NSF and Force 17 bases after June 12 gunbattles, but this report has not been independently confirmed. PASF sources downplayed the significance of the buildings Hamas took over. Hamas gunmen also destroyed a Bahriya (coastal patrol) base near the Khan Yunis wharf. As of 1500 local, Hamas fighters had established checkpoints and occupied several schools and PA buildings, and rooftops of private and NGO buildings throughout Khan Yunis. The NSF clashed with "Executive Force" and Hamas military-wing fighters around NSF bases near al-Burayj and Nussayrat Refugee Camps on June 12 and shooting continued at 1500 local. Hamas fighters are engaged in heavy fighting in Dayr al-Balah as of 1500 local.

Fatah and Hamas Ignore Ceasefire Call;  
Egyptian Mediator Frustrated

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17. (SBU) MG Burhan Hamad (Egyptian GID), the lead Egyptian mediator and ceasefire Follow-Up Committee representative, told Arabic-language press June 12 that neither Fatah nor Hamas representatives had responded to his invitation to hold new ceasefire talks at 1300 local on June 12. He said fighters from both sides "are doing the devil's work" and "have killed the future for Palestinians." He said neither Hamas nor Fatah can win a civil war and he will call Palestinians into the streets to protest if the two factions do not halt the violence.

West Bank: Limited Clashes; PASF Take  
Over Hamas-linked TV Station in Ramallah

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18. (C) PASF took over Hamas-affiliated al-Aqsa Television's Ramallah bureau on June 12, arresting three employees and confiscating reporting equipment. (Note: The Ramallah office is a branch office for reporters and producers of the

station, but all TV transmissions are from the main office in Gaza City. End note). West Bank NSF commander Thiab Ali (Abu al-Fatah) told Poloff June 12 that there is minimal spillover of violence into the West Bank so far, but the NSF is closely watching for Fatah militants who may try to retaliate against West Bank Hamas members.

Comment

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19. (C) Gaza's security situation has deteriorated significantly in the last 48 hours, with a higher level of incitement and violence than in previous interfactional clashes. There is no evident political brake on current violence, and severe fighting continues around key PASF installations in Gaza City.

WALLES